

Development Block Grant and the Head Start programs. We know these two Federal programs provide critical resources to support our Nation's children, educators and working families.

At a time when almost 12 million children under age 5 are currently in child care, the resources for their care and early education continue to be stretched after 7 straight years of nearly flat funding. The stagnant support for these programs has caused thousands of children to lose child care assistance, and fewer children today attend Head Start programs than 6 years ago.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start are proven programs that lead to increased cognitive and social development. The programs greatly improve the ability of children to succeed in school. Increased funding will also promote greater employment among parents through less time missed from work, higher incomes, and reduced rates of turnover.

In my State of Pennsylvania, over 522,000 children under age 6 need care because the parents are hard at work trying to provide their children with opportunities for success. That is why I support increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the Head Start and Early Start programs. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

AMERICAN VICTIMS OF HAMAS

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, yesterday SHELLEY BERKLEY and I, along with 55 of our Democratic and Republican colleagues, sent a bipartisan letter to President Carter calling on him to cancel his meeting with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal.

The State Department lists Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization, and Hamas terrorists are responsible for the murders of at least 26 American citizens, some of them teenagers, children and infants.

Here are two of the victims, 3-month-old Shmuel Taubenfeld and 3-year-old Tehilla Nathanson. They are the faces of American citizens with their light extinguished by Hamas terrorists.

If you live in Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio, California, North Carolina, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, or Florida, then Americans from your State have been murdered by Hamas.

President Carter, do not meet with the man who ordered the deaths of our fellow citizens.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

MCCAIN DOESN'T UNDERSTAND

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the presumptive Republican nominee for President, John McCain, wasn't kidding when he said he didn't understand the economy. He has proposed a gas tax holiday. Now let's think about it for a minute. Gas today costs three times as much as it did in 1993, but the Federal gas tax hasn't changed since 1993. So what is the cause of the big run-up?

Well, it might be the \$40 billion record profit at ExxonMobil and the \$400 million exit given to their last CEO. That might be part of it.

It might be the OPEC cartel colluding to drive up the price of oil and restrict demand. Or it could be the hedge fund speculators and others on Wall Street driving up the cost unnecessarily so they can make money.

But the nominee of the Grand Oil Party, the GOP, he's not going to take on Big Oil. He's not going to take on Wall Street. He's not going to take on OPEC. What he is going to do is cut Federal investment in our crumbling infrastructure, put hundreds of thousands of construction workers out of jobs, and condemn even more Americans to being jammed on congested highways that need improvement and bridges that are collapsing where we don't have the money to rebuild.

HONORING HOMETOWN U.S.A. PROGRAM

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an organization in my district in Leesburg, Florida, that is making a difference for the people of Florida.

Florida's Hometown U.S.A. was formed to instill in Florida's youth the value of volunteer service. Students from across the State are selected each year to participate in the program. Each year five students are selected from elementary school to high school as participants. The volunteers' focus is on helping children and the elderly by providing food, clothes, personal care items, and assistance wherever it is needed.

Each year the organization holds its Florida Hometown U.S.A. pageant, which serves as its main fundraiser. Florida's Hometown U.S.A. program has received recognition for the positive impact and outcome it has achieved in the local communities.

I want to congratulate these fine young volunteers, especially the fine young students who are selected every year, and especially program director Linda Watts, for all she has done over the past 22 years. She has enhanced the community of Leesburg which I represent. Thank you, Linda, for all of your hard work. Keep up your hard work for the program, and God bless you.

SETBACKS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. WEINER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker and ladies and gentlemen of the House, our bipartisan efforts to isolate terrorism and terrorists and to find a lasting and secure peace in the Middle East got two setbacks this week from sadly predictable sources.

First, the United Nations appointed a human rights inspector by the name of Richard Falk whom my hometown newspaper, the Daily News, correctly called "the nutty professor" because of his position, as he goes into this job of overseeing human rights, that the Israelis are like Nazis. This is who they appoint to try to come to a peaceful human rights conclusion in that part of the world.

And then, sadly, we had another chapter in how not to be a former President from Jimmy Carter who goes to the Middle East, and rather than trying to pursue peace, embraces Hamas, the organization responsible for hundreds of rockets falling in Israel.

It is hard to imagine two institutions or two people that could be more of a setback than these two. The United Nations once again shows that they are unfit for their role of trying to find a moderate and lasting peace in that part of world. And, sadly, Jimmy Carter continues to write a chapter about how not to be a former President.

HONORING THE MEINEKE COMPANY

(Mrs. MYRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor the Meineke Company today and their efforts to employ ex-offenders who have participated in the Second Chance Program.

Meineke is one if not the first national company to actively hire ex-offenders returning from prison while also promoting opportunity within the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Through participation in this program, individuals are ready to not only enter but also contribute to the workforce once they have paid their debt to society. Meineke continues to promote participation in the Second Chance Program at all of its franchise meetings, in newsletters, and through a publication called Second Chance Profiles. This periodical is sent out company wide, and chronicles the personal story of employees who have truly exhibited the meaning of a life-changing experience.

I commend Meineke CEO Ken Walker, Director of National Accounts Dave Holland, and Cordell Riley, President